
THE
Right Way of Trying
PROPHETS, &c.

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THE Right Way of Trying PROPHETS:

OR,

Some Considerations and Reasons
to Prove the Truth of the great *Dispensation*
of Divine Providence; already begun by
Prophetic Inspiration: To wit, The sudden
Appearance of the Kingdom of Christ upon
Earth, by the wonderful Effusion of the Holy
Ghost. *K.*

By *F. M.* one of the Sect of those call'd *PROPHETS*.

*Covet earnestly the best Gifts: Let shew I unto you a more
excellent Way, 1 Cor. 12. 32.*

To which is added,

An Answer thereunto, Paragraph by Paragraph;

TOGETHER WITH

Some Remarks on the Knowledge of the DEVIL in
Contingent Futurities, and Natural Philosophy; as deliver'd
in a Sermon, Novemb. 9. 1707.

By *G. Philadelphia.*

LO N D O N Printed; and Sold by Benj. Bragg at the Black
Raven in Pater-Noster-Row. 1708.

Възстановка на
Софийския музей

George County, Virginia, to the State of Virginia, and the State of Virginia to the State of North Carolina, and the State of North Carolina to the State of South Carolina, and the State of South Carolina to the State of Georgia, and the State of Georgia to the State of Florida.

1. *Alles di' nicht op*
2. *Alles di' nicht op*
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To assist group now in the field. Considerable time of travel and expense
will be involved in getting to the site of the survey and the work will be
done in the field. The cost of the survey will be approximately \$10,000.00.
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THE
**Right Way of Trying
PROPHETS;**
OR,
**Some Considerations and Reasons to
prove, &c.**

YOU are warn'd in Holy Scriptures, not to believe every Spirit; but to examine and try the Spirits, whether they are of God. You are likewise therein warn'd not to despise, but covet Prophesying, for the Testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy: As also not to quench the Holy Spirit. Therefore the Occasion and Purpose of such a Dispensation, as well as the Evidences and Testimonials of such Messengers, ought diligently to be regarded and examin'd by every one, none excepted; and that, with Child-like Humility, by Prayer and serious Meditation.

Ans. This Paragraph, I must own, containing in it many Texts of Scripture, must pass for unquestionable Truth: But then

give me leave to add this Caution, That when you quote Texts of Scripture, that you observe the genuine Sence of the whole Text, and also the proper signification of the Words therein contain'd. For *Prophecy*, in many places of the Old and New Testament also, signifies *Preaching*, as well as *Foretelling things Future*. *If all prophesie* (says St. Paul) *and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judg'd of all*, I Cor. 14. ver. 24. So again, ver. 29, 31. and in divers other places, too long here to insert, the Word *Prophecy* denotes *Preaching*, or *Teaching*. This I have propounded because it is the Way many times of a Party to impose upon men of weaker Understanding than themselves by verbal Arguments and misconstructions of Words and Texts, to gain Profelytes over to their sides. 'Tis no matter, say they, upon what Grounds you believe *as we do*, so that you do but believe, we can rectifie the original Delusion when we have firmly riveted you in our Principles, and you become close inbosom'd in our Congregation. This is so common a Practice in the Church of *Rome*, that I need to recite no other Instance to prove it, they being willing to let all their Profelytes at the first believe *as they please*, and *what they please*, so that you make but a fair Declaration at first of your being a *True Roman-Catbolic*, tho' you cannot believe every point at present that the Holy Mother, the Church, holds and dictates. This I mention, because you seem to be a diffident Believer of the Doctrines of this prophetic Sect, because, Paragraph 18th, you say, *If within a few Months a full Attestation of their Commissionis and Messages be not confirm'd by Miracles, &c. They will own themselves deluded*. What boot is it for them to own a *Delusion*, when *Detmonstration proves it an Imposture*? If you would take my Advice, turn the Tables on 'em, and shew your self to have recover'd your Senses and Reason, by deserting them for those few Months, and if those Miracles appear to be really done, then assure them you'l come over to 'em again. This I think a wise Man would do; but whether the inward Motions of your Spirit prompts you so to do, I cannot tell, but hope the best: After you have well weighed my Answers to your *Testimonials*, as you call 'em, or *Evidences of the true Manifestation of the Holy Spirit*. In order to gain which, you say, *answering to sixo* I

First,

First, Let the Unbeliever examine himself, Whether he bath serv'd his Lord, his God, with all his Heart and Soul, in Spirit and in Truth: and lov'd his Neighbour as himself: and whethrr he, in earnest, desires God's saving Health unto all People and Nations. In which, if he is not in his own Conscience justified, ought he not to bless and praise his gracious God, for extraordinary Warnings to him, to Repent and Amend, that thereby he may be prepared for this Kingdom State; and to pray, Come Lord Jesus come quickly?

Ans^w. Here you seem to run from one thing to another, from pretended Prophecy to Unbelief; unless you mean the Unbelievers of your prophetic Inspirations, I can hardly gather the Meaning thereof: For Infidelity is no distinguishing Mark of a false Prophet, because a false Prophet may be a Believer in Christ; nay the Devils believe and tremble, James 2. 19. Again, What have we to do with thee Jesus thou Son of God, Mat. 8. 29. So that for you to talk of Infidelity in general, I look upon it to be a mighty Incoherence in your Discourse, and no ways to the purpose. But come, let us take it your Way, and the Words shall be these; Let the Unbeliever of our Prophetic Warnings, &c. What then? Those Qualifications you recite don't at all relate to the gaining a prophetic Spirit; but are parts of the Duty of every good Christian to do, and I verily believe is done by most immediately before receiving the Holy Sacrament. For he that pretends to the Gift of the Holy Spirit, must enter into another sort of Examination within himself. As, Whether those Emotions he feels in his Soul be Divine or Diabolical, Supernatural or Praeternatural; from what Spring they had their Original; and how came you at first to perceive these pretended Operations of the Holy Ghost working in you: and then to examine fully, by such Marks of Distinction as the Scripture prescribes, Whether they are not Enthusiastical Delusions and Impostures? These Questions are the proper Subject preparatory to make you a Prophet, if you design to be one; if not, let Saul come out from amongst the Prophets, and not talk of Thanking God for his extraordinary Warnings, whenas you seem rather to endeavour to impose on the All-seeing Eye of the Almighty, by Tricks and Juggles of Religion (for I can call 'em no better.) And then consider

Consider seriously with your self what an horrid state of wretched Sinfulness you have walked in, tho' but for few Months, in Defiance to God, with a voluntary deluded Conscience. You say, indeed,

Secondly, However Righteous the Peruser of these Lines may think himself, let him but look into the sinful, wretched, degenerate State of Mankind at this day; and he will probably thereby apprehend the infinite Mercy and Goodness of God to the World, in such Revelations and Warnings preparatory, before the Execution of the severe Judgments so suddenly threatned.

Answ. The degenerate, sinful state of Mankind has been the general Complaint several hundred Years, and was, in my opinion, far greater in respect of many Religious Points than now. For Worshipping of Images, Invocation of Saints, &c. were not only permitted, but, to add to the burthen of iniquity, commanded by Human Laws. But suppose this Age to be the worst you ever read of, or heard of; it doth not necessarily infer, that we must have *Revelations and Warnings preparatory*, as if the Day of Judgment was at hand; because *so suddenly threatned*, as you say. For, admitting the day of Judgment were near, we have no Promise of *antecedent Revelations and Warnings* in the Holy Scripture, the only prophetic Writing that can forewarn us of Dangers of that Nature. But, pray, how comes your Prophetic Self to know the *Day of Judgment will be in few Months?* Our Saviour says, *Of that Day and that Hour knoweth no Man, no not the Angels of Heaven, but my Father only*, Mat. 24. ver. 36. I confess we have one Sign of it in this our Age, *Viz.* Before that Day there shall arise false Christs, and false Prophets, and shall show great Signs and Wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very Elect, ver. 24. of the same chapter. But compare the other Signs, Forerunners of the day of Judgment, and that seems not as yet to be at hand. False Prophets, and false Teachers have been in all Ages past, and I believe will be to the End of the World. *But Wo be to him that seduceth the Righteous out of his Way, and layeth a Stumbling-block of Offence for the Innocent.*

The more comprehensive Occasion and Use, of such a Dispensation, we may learn from holy Scripture: To wit, The Calling in of the Jews: The Fulness of the Gentiles: The Preaching of the Gospel to the Ends of the Earth: The Intire Sanctification of all: The Opening and fuller Revelation of several Texts Propheticall and Mysterious, which as yet are not generally asserted to be understood: The Restoring Christianity, now delug'd in Vice and Corruption, to its Primitive Purity, and to the supernatural Gifts and Communications of the Holy Spirit. Nay farther, the Restoring of all things lost, by Adam's Fall, from the Burden of the Curse (under which whole Nature groans to be deliver'd) to their original, pure and paradisical State: All this is promis'd, and will be accomplish'd. But how? By the Seed of the Woman, which is to break the Serpent's Head: By our Lord Christ Jesus, our Saviour and our Redemeer, by whom the Heavens were created; who is the Alpha and Omega; who will reconcile all things to himself, who will make the Beginning and End one, in his Joyful and Sabbatical rest, where, as promis'd to be reveal'd from Heaven, he will reign, by his Holy Spirit, in the Heart of everyone.

Answ. I cannot but own with you that some Prophetic Places of Scripture, as yet, are not fulfilled, viz. Relating to the Calling of the Jews, the Fulness of the Gentiles, &c. But how do these things agree with your Few Months? You have mention'd abundance of Things to be done in so little time, that it has spoyl'd the Credit of your whole Design. I confess nothing is impossible to God, he may in two Minutes so Influence the whole World, that they may become Converts, Restore all things to a Paradisical State, as you call it, &c. But no wise Man argues from the Possibility of doing a Thing that therefore it will be done, He that has conceal'd even from his Angels the Day of Judgment, may justly be suppos'd to have conceal'd even from them also, much more from Man, the Methods of his restoring all things to a Paradisical State on Earth: Besides the Information given us of such certain Futurities was from Men, whom all the Christian World own to have been Divinely Inspir'd, nay who proved that Inspiration by Miracles confess'd even by their Enemies to be true. Now could the Abettors of your Prophetic Warnings Bring such an Authority for their Truths, as you call 'em,

their Doctrines also would incline my Belief, as readily as Scriptural Prophecy's do. But since we have *Moses and the Prophets* declar'd to be sufficient to obtain Salvation by, I expect no confutation from any one that *shall rise from the Dead*, you may, you have a *Few Months* allowed you before you are resolved to be convinced of your pernicious Principles. But say you,

We are likewise told, in Sacred Writ, That, before these things come to pass, there shall be a Midnight Cry, to make way for that Bridegroom. And why should not this now be going forth? May it not likewise consist with the infinite Wisdom, Goodness, and Prerogative-Power of God, seeing that human and ordinary Means of Teaching and Preaching are ineffectual to these great Ends, to send forth or raise up extraordinary Messengers, endow'd with suitable Powers and Graces of his Holy Spirit, for such Purposes? according to that in the Ephesians, the 4th Chapter, 11th, 12th and 13th Verses, which seems a Promise of it; as also in 1 Cor. 13. 9, 10. Is it not said that, before the Fulness of all Things, the Holy Spirit, shall be pour'd out upon all Flesh; and that all, which pray for this Holy Spirit, shall have it; and thereby be taught, immediately from the least to the greatest, to know the Lord their God, and serve him in Spirit and in Truth? And are not such extraordinary Things and Messengers to forerun, and prepare the way, for the great and terrible Day of the Lord, against the Wicked? God is true, and cannot lie. These things are promis'd and not yet fulfil'd: Therefore; why not now at the Door? which if so, as the Writer apprehends, and several learned Divines of all sorts in this Age, have asserted; no Teacher, or Minister of any Congregation or People, which hath carefully and conscientiously executed his Ministrations, need or ought to be offended at God's Revelation of these Glorious Appearances of this Kingdom State of Christ's Church on Earth: as hath been acknowledg'd, to the Writer of these Lines, by some Pious and Good Ministers of the Church of England. But Wo! Wo to all obstinate Opposers, and rebellious Wicked! For Blood, and Fire, and Smoak is foretold in that notable Day, to be their Desolation, who are thus found fighting against God. And may not such Offences, persist in, come within the Definition of the Sin against the Holy Ghost; which is not to be forgiven, in this World, or that to come? The following Considerations are such, as seem to evidence these Messengers, and their Commissions, to be now beginning; taking it for granted from the Premises, that such times and such things not being fulfill'd, are yet to come to pass.

Answ.

Ans. We are told indeed of a *Midnight-Cry* in the Holy Scriptures, what then? Why, say you, *may not this now be going forth?* Indeed I find no reason for it, unless the *Hooting* of your Argumentation prove it the *Midnight of Understanding*: For the Scripture tells us of Men *whose Understanding is darkned*, and so indeed yours seems to be, notwithstanding you pretend to be of a *Congregation Enlightned by the Spirit*: For (in my Opinion) *Humane and Ordinary means are sufficient to make that Reformation of Manners and Religion, requisite before the Great Day of Judgment.* And that *Extraordinary Messengers for that purpose, endued with suitable Powers and Graces of the Holy Spirit may not be Forerunners of the Day of Judgment.* The most peculiar mark forerunning that *Day*, tho' not the *only one*, seems to consist in *False Prophets, who shall deceive many*, which is the *Mark* your *Sect* have taken care shall never be wanting in the *World*; if they can Propagate it to *Posterity*, let the *Day of Judgment* be when it will. And whereas you refer you self to *Ephes. 4. v. 11, 12, 13.* wherein it is express'd, that *God gave some Apostles, some Evangelists, some Prophets, Pastors, and Teachers*, this was done at the first settling of *Christianity*, and *v. 12.* The *End thereof is specifi'd for the Edifying of the Body of Christ*, i. e. The *whole Body of the Christian Church, till they grow into a Perfect Man*, *v. 13.* Now had you but added the *Reasons mention'd in the very next verse, That we henceforth be no more Children toss'd to and fro by every Wind of Doctrine, by the Slight of men, and cunning Craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive.* *v. 14.* You would hardly have made use of these *Texts for Arguments.* But with these compare *1 Cor. 12. v. 28, 29.* So that your *Question, Why are not, &c. now at the Doors?* is easily *Answer'd*, Because as yet all the *true signs declar'd in Scripture necessary to forerun the Day of Judgment do not yet appear, viz. Calling of the Jews, &c.* Tho' you contrary to the *positive Letter of the Scripture*, as I conceive, pretend to determine a *fix'd day of Judgment*; As to these *considerations following*, which you mention to be *Evidences of your Prophetic Sects being Divine Messengers and to have Divine Commissions*, as you try to prove from *Sense, Reason, and Faith, Grounded on Holy Scriptures.* I'll shew you the *weakness of such Proofs and Arguments.* You say,

As First, The Appearances of a Supernatural Power, involuntarily operating upon the Organs and Bodys of Men, Women and Children, agreeable with those mention'd in the 32d of Job, the 20th of Jeremiah, the 39th Psalm, and elsewhere, are to me an Evidence.

Ans'w. As to those Appearances of a Supernatural Power, &c. I can at present say very little, save only that what I have heard reported by some of your own Sect. Nor doth it appear to me That those Emotions Operating in them, are Involuntary, but admit they were, are no Evidence of a Divine Commission: For what think you of the unclean Spirit in the Gospel, which possess'd the Person with such Involuntary Motions, That he foam'd and tore himself often, nay, threw himself into the Fire, Luke 9, 37. These were Prater-natural, but not Super-natural Motions done by an Unclean Spirit, and I hope cannot be an Evidence of the Unclean Spirit's Divine Commission. As to the three Places in Scripture, you mention, I suppose you took 'em by bear-say for your Purpose. For in Job. 32 Elihu a Young Man gives Counsel to his Elders, and as to Psal. 39. 'Tis a whole consideration on the perishing Inconstant State of Man's Life, indeed he says, he would therefore take heed to his ways that he Offended not with his Tongue, v. 1. He was Dumb and kept silence even from Good, v. 2. Which Doctrine I wish you had Learn'd perfectly, then you had not been so forward in a mistaken Zeal to vent Prophetic Dreams of I know not what Divine Commissions for your Prophets, and Jeremiah 20, confests chiefly in his Complaint, and Cursing the Day of his Birth, which I charitably hope you will have no Reason to do. But what do all these Chapters signifie to a Supernatural Power involuntarily Operating, &c. You might have Quoted upon better Grounds, all the Prophets in the whole Bible, as well as David and Jeremiah, and told the world that your Prophets have just such Commissions as they had, but how you would have made us believe it, I can easily Prophecy my self. Again, There are known Cheats and Juglers in the World call'd Ventriloqui, or Belly speakers, who by a Craft to manage the Voice, seem to speak as if it came out of the Belly. Now could you but get one of these to manage the Religious Trick by your Sect set up, undoubtedly he would quickly make Voluntary Motions seem to be Involuntary, which conjoyn'd with an Inward murmur

mururing Voice in the Belly will unquestionably pass for a Compleat Prophet, at least one Big of Inspiration and longing to be Delivered. Had you read more of *Phyfic*, and less of *Jacub Bekmen*, you might find several Instances of Men, Women, and Children, acted by *Involuntary Motions* in *Hysteric Fitts*, nay, Sing to perfection, tho' in their natural State of Health, never could Sing the least Note, Climb up Walls like Cats, and do abundance of such Prodigious wonderful Actions (vid. Dr. *Willis de Passione Hysterica*) All which no sober Men, can, or will Attribute to a Supernatural Agency, but all must own to be *Præter-natural*. So that your first Evidence, I presume, of their Divine Mission drawn from a Supernatural Power falls to the Ground. But say you,

Secondly, *Divine Instructions, Discourses, Exhortations, Consolations and Prayers*, from Persons manifestly incapable to utter them, in their natural Capacities, may be some Evidence.

Answ. This is answered sufficiently before, if the Matter of Fact be true, and it amounts only to a *May-be-Evidence*, which I have before demonstrated from *Scriptures*, and *Experience*, the two greatest Evidences that can be brought for Conviction, That such tions may be rather Cheats and Counterfeit involuntary Motions, or *Præter-natural*, rather than the Operations of a Divine Spirit.

Thirdly, *The frider Behaviour and Reformation, in the Lives and Conversations of these Persons*, may be urg'd for Evidence.

Answ. This can be no Evidence of a *Prophetic Spirit*, but it may be of a *Good-Man*, as undoubtedly there are amongst all Sects and Professions of Religion, who never pretended to the *Spirit of Prophesie*. But you farther urge.

Fourthly, *Their Prophefies agreeing in all things with those in Holy Writ, explanatory and more express to the Present Time, and not mixed with any Errors either of Doctrine, or tending to ill Life, or any Disturbance of secular Authority, or the Countenancing of any Sect or Party.*

Answ.

Ans^w. As for their Prophesies being consonant to the Holy Writ, and adapted to the Present Times, I cannot find any in their Writings, or Prophetic Warnings, It is true, they frequently use Scripture Phrases, and Expressions, but, I would unwillingly say in the Scripture-Language, *wresting them to their own Damnation*. And that they have *no Errors in their Doctrines*, is a very bold, and untrue assertion, unles^s it be meant, They have *no single Error*, but the *whole Body of Divinity is one Compleat Grand Error*. In short, If they could Prophecy with a true Divine Spirit, they would have foretold their own Punishments, as our Saviour did to his Disciples, *Mat. 10. v. 16, 17, 18, &c.* to the end of the Chapter. But it's plain they did not, or could not, which had been a very material Evidence, because so parallel to our Saviour's own Actions recited in the Holy Scriptures, and after a secular Authority has punish'd them for *endeavouring to disturb the Public Peace of Her Majesties Leige People*, you must certainly be possess'd with the Spirit of Contradiction, to assert so positively things against plain Matter of Fact.

Fifthly, The Ministratiⁿ of the Spirit to others, by laying on of Hands, I think must be an Evidence, as in the Apostles it was pleaded such.

Ans^w. This depending upon Matter of Fact, to prove it, I must say admits of no direct Answer, but a flat Denial. If they can confer the *Gift of Prophecy* by Laying on of Hands, I am sure they will *shortly* be able to do unquestionable Miraculous Works, sufficient to convince the World, and make almost all the World turn Profelytes too. However I think it very convenient to stay the *Few Months* promiss'd before I become a Convert, as I desired you just now to do likewise: Only I cannot forbear giving them this serious Admonition, That they would rightly weigh with themselves what a strange peice of Blasphemous Impudence it must be to assume to give the Power of the Holy-Ghost by their laying on of Hands, when there appears not the least proof of their being endow'd with the same, you may read, *Act^s 19. v. 15.* That when certain *Vagabond Jews, Exorcists*, took upon them to cast out Devils in the Name of the *Lord Jesus*, the possessed of evil

vil Spirits, said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know but who are ye ?
 A Question with the whole Context very applicable to your
 Prophetic Sect.

*Sixthly, The Making Promises personal, and the ensuing performing
 of them, is some Evidence.*

Answ. This is sufficiently answered before in the Answer to your
 Third Pretended Evidence. For were every sober Good Christian,
 that makes personal Promises, and keeps 'em strictly a Prophet
 presently, no doubt but there would be Infinite more Prophets then
 there are at present.

*Seventhly, The discovering the Secrets of Hearts, as many can witness
 they have had Instances, as to what happen'd in themselves.*

Answ. This is a most admirable Qualification indeed, but such, as
 I can allow no Man on the Face of the Earth to do. For it seems
 to me to be a Prerogative of the Almighty only, who is call'd the
 Searcher of Hearts, and knoweth the Thoughts of Man. So that
 they seem to Invade the Prerogative of God Almighty, without
 giving an Evidence of their Inspir'd Power. For, its plain all the
 Evidences before mentioned are no sufficient Ground to prove any
 Divine Commission, or Prophetic Spirit, and those which follow,
 I doubt will prove as little. However, let us come to Matter of
 Fact, let but any one of your Prophets tell me what I thought on
 the first Day of the past Month at twelve of the Clock or what I
 shall think on the first day of the next Month, and I'll believe
 them, nay, will do my endeavour to recommend them to the Go-
 vernment to be amply rewarded for finding out all secret Intregues,
 and designs of Malicious Plotters, from whom (if you say true)
 they cannot Conceal their Thoughts, if these Discerners of Hearts
 appear once before 'em, to bring them to a necessary Confession.

*Eightly, These Persons doing these Things above the Power of Nature,
 as the above-mention'd, and others, disinterestedly suffering extremely
 for them, as well as the Truth of their Doctrines, to which the Scrip-
 tures Witness, is further Evidence. To the Proof of which Matters of
 Fact*

Fact there are presump'd to be some hundreds of living Witnesses, in this City, if thereto call'd.

Answ. I cannot admit this Evidence to be true, because it doth not appear they have done *any thing above the Power of Nature*, but from the Testimonies of their own Sect, who seem to espouse a Causè with zealous Ignorance, and then by trying to support it, according to the Works of the Prince of the Power of the Air, *who comes with Power, and lying Wonders, and with all deceivableness of Unrighteousness*, 2 Thessal. chap. 2. But when the *Super-natural Works* you talk of do appear to be true Matter of Fact, you'll know more of my Mind, but at present your Evidences seem very weak, and unable to make me, or any one else, in my Opinion a Convert.

Farther, May not the Nature of this Voice remove all Suspicion of Imposture or Delusion, for that the Honour and Glory of God, who hath declar'd himself a Jealous God, hath not been known to suffer his Name to be so presumptuously blasphem'd, by any created Spirit or Being, not sent by his Authority: as to say, I am, Jebovah; I am the Lord thy God, who made the Heavens and the Earth, and will create all things new; and many other such like Expressions, in the Name and Person of God. No Instance from History Sacred, nor perhaps from Profane History, can be given of such Things, especially by Numbers of reputed sober, conscientious, and good Men; Men of Learning, Fortune, and on whom no selfish or ill Design can be charg'd; and with them by others of weaker Capacities, and Women, and young Children, not capable of being taught such profound Sayings, or such Impieties.

Answ. As to the Nature of the Voice removing all suspicion of Imposture or Delusion, because God is a Jealous God, and hath not been known to have suffer'd his Name presumptuously Blasphemed, 'tis no more an Argument, than any other vicious Habit would be. You may say God would not suffer a notorious Swearer to Blaspheme his Name, as too many do now-a-days; nor a Sacrilegious Person (which is one of the greatest Indignities that can be offer'd to the Almighty) or an Idolator, to live, for which God is call'd a Jealous God in the second Commandment. Yet I find many thin-
ving

ving Sacrilegys on the World, and whole Nations of Idolaters, who go unpunish'd by the immediate Hand of God as yet for Reasons best known to his Almighty Wisdom, vid. *Psal. 73. Job. 21. Jerem. 12.* Again, you mightily mistake, when you say, *No Instance from History Sacred, or perhaps from Prophane History can be given of such things done, &c.* Pray what think you of *Abab's Lying Prophets*, who Impos'd upon *Abab* in the *Name of the Lord*, *1 Kings 23. v. 6.* to the *11th*. These were all bred according to the Jewish Constitutions, Sober Conscientious Men, yet in the *Name of the Lord Prophesy'd Lyes*. The Devil himself Quoted Scripture to our Saviour, *Mat. 3. v. 6.* And our Saviour tells you, before the end of the World, *False Prophets shall come in his Name*, *Mark 13. v. 6.* and *shall deceive many*, nay shall plead it in *Justification at the last Day*, *We have Prophesied in thy Name*, *cast out Devils in thy Name*, *Mat. 7. v. 22.* Yet Christ shall say, *Depart from me I know you not*. Remember this dreadful Sentence, and be wise.

As to Prophane History, the *Ventriloqui* abovementioned, are Proof that God's Name is frequently used to base and villainous Ends, and not suddenly reveng'd by his Almighty Power. And *Apollonius* a Conjurer, mention'd by *Philostrates*, is said to foretell *Domitian's Death*, besides other Instances I could produce, if not too numerous, to convince you (if possible first to remove your conceived Prejudice,) of your Erroneous Argumentations.

Lastly, I shou'd hope their acting and reasoning, as others do, consistently, at all other times, according to their natural Capacitys, wou'd, with sober and good Men, testify against Imposture or Delusion. And therefore several of them seeing glorious and significant *Visions* (in which way God reveal'd a great part of his holy Will) this also deserves its Consideration.

Answ. Their acting Consistent with themselves, as Men of Reason, at all times, as well out, as in those Ecstatic Fits, argues them to be very *Cunning*, as to the Management of a Religious Imposture, and Men fit to be Emissaries of the Church of *Rome*, who seldom employ *Fools* on such Errands, but still it is no Argument of a *Divine Commission*. For if so, All crafty Politicians in any State whatever might pretend to the same, if they had a mind to cover sinister Designs with a Religious Cloak. Now altho' I have a *Justification* on my side to Brand them with the *Character* of *Impostures*, because the *Scriptures* foretel us of none but *False Prophets*, and *Deceivers* that shall arise in future times, which I apprehend to be after the *Apostolic economy* expir'd; yet I will not do it, tell these *Few Months* are expir'd also, wherein they *must own themselves* deluded to their own *Shame* and *Confusion*, nor doth it trouble me to hear you say, —

I cou'd cite other Things, as the Earnestness (or manifest Beginnings) of the Gifts of Healing; of Tongues; of discerning of Spirits; and other miraculous Powers. But there are publick Declarations and Appeals to God, for his Decision. And I have lately heard, from their Mouths under Ecstasy, That, if, within a few Months, a fuller Attestation of their Commissions and Message be not manifested and confirm'd, by miraculous Signs and Powers from Heaven, and by working of such Miracles, as were done by our Saviour and the Apostles, even to the raising the Dead; that then they will own themselves deluded.

Answ. All their publick Declarations and Appeals to God for a Decision, argue, in my Opinion, very great Confidence (to call it no worser Name) if not *Insolence* to the highest Degree, especially when such Doctrines by Arguments of Reason and Scripture can be proved Erroneous. And as to the *Miraculous Signs and Powers from Heaven*, we are shortly to have exerted amongst us in order to a full Conversion, They, when they are done, will quickly decide the Controversie: But if they should never be done, what account will you giye for your *Obsti-*

Obstinate Deserting those Principles of Religion you have been Educated in for Mysterious pretended Revelations, and Enthusiastic Delusions? But go on,

Now I say, as the Writer hereof is no Prophet; but, by Grace and Faith, a Believer and enquirer into these so great and tremendous Affairs; so he could wish, That the World would not only cease for a little time at least, to censure these high Gifts (or Pretensions) by uncharitable Distinctions; but farther, for their own and Neighbours good, endeavour to undeceive and discover the delusive Error, or worse Design, if any be therein.

Ans^r. Though you are no Prophet, but a Believer and enquirer into those tremendous Affairs, yet give me leave to tell you, That 'tis the Care of every good Christian to recover a lost Brother in Christianity by all means possible, if he can. You desire us to discover the delusive Error, or worse Design, if any there be therein. 'Tis upon this Account, I have wrote this little Tract with Answers to every Paragraph distinctly, and I hope satisfactorily to convince you, if you will but add your own Prayers to God, That he would open your Heart, and the Eyes of your Understanding to let you see your Error. But say you farther, —

But if these Reasonings and Positions cannot be obviated, by solid and proper Answers; which I must seriously recommend to the Thoughts and Examination of every Candid and Pious Reader: Wou'd it not be to the Glory of God, to the Comfort of their own Souls, and the good of their Neighbour, to be the Messengers and Publishers of such good Tidings to others, rather than barely to lay them up in their Hearts, without any farther Improvement of their Talent? It being certain, that whosoever glorifies the Lord their God, by a lively and active Faith, serves a gracious and bountiful Master, who abundantly rewards, and hath promis'd that our Works shall follow us!

Answ. In all such Cases you ought to appeal to indifferent Judges, whom neither Party, *Partiality*, or *Prejudice* oversways. You see I have thoroughly examin'd every Paragraph as they come under several *Heads of Evidences* seeming to confirm the veracity of those *Good Tidings*, these *Messengers* in their *Divine Commissions* pretend to bring us. But because all that can be said in this Case, amounts not to a Demonstration of Matter of Fact (because you say, we must wait a little while, and we shall have *that* too;) yet with me, Reasons so home urged, and built on the sacred Authority of the Holy Scriptures are tantamount to the greatest Demonstration in the World. *I know God is a Gracious and Bountiful Master*, and has promised *our Works shall follow us*. But if we are put to the *Ju*-*stification of our Works* by the sacred *Scriptures*, not from mysterious pretended *Revelations*; I doubt we shall be dismis'd in the Great Day of Examination, with an *Who hath requir'd these Things at thy Hands?* God has given us a sure Guide, the *Holy Scriptures*. We are not to expect *Miracles* at every turn, but to try every *Spirit pretending to Propheſie* even by that *Touchſtone*, and by such *Rules* therein prescrib'd. So that you see that *Propheſie* it self, *though a Gift immediate from God*, and one would think had no need of any further Tryal than present *Miraculous Operations*, yet is subjected by command from God, to be tryed by the Authority of the *Holy Scriptures*. But, say you,

God Almighty grant, to the great Comfort and Consola-
tion of the Soul of every Reader, such Spiritual Favours,
as he now freely beſtows on his Children. And as the Con-
templation of these transcendent Blessings hath afforded an Ear-
nest of refin'd and ravishing Enjoyments to the Writer hereof;
so he ſincerely prays, Come Lord Jesus, come quickly; and is;
in Christian Love and Charity;

Yours, tho' unknown.

Anſw.

Answ. I could freely joyn with you in this Prayer, except those Spiritual Favours lately bestow'd on His Children. Because it no ways appears that those Favours are bestow'd which you talk of, or that your Sect are his Peculiar Children. That you have receiv'd mighty Ravishing Enjoyments from the Contemplation of those transcendent invisible Blessings; I cannot deny, but you may, in your own Fancy, but it looks to me to be like the poor Man in a Dream who was vastly rich, and wonderfully pleas'd with his sudden Greatness, and plenty till an unexpected Noise awak'd him out of his Sleep, and taught him never to believe or rely on the imaginary Pleasures of a Dream. Such Effects, I pray God send that this little Treatise may work in you, and that you no longer may be given over to believe strong Delusions, and the crafty Imaginations of designing Men.

I should have thought the Power of the Devil might have Operated amongst your Sect to foretell future events, and certain contingences, and thereby ye might work such Works as might seem Miraculous. *For the Devil is without doubt (says a late Authour) a better Natural Philosopher than any Man, and so may foresee, and inspire his Emissaries to foretell several Events of this kind, which no mortal Man by his own Wit or Skill could have foretold* Pag. 21. 8vo. 'I say, I might have thought some, 'Satanic Influence of the Devil had influenc'd your Prophetic Sect to foretell some things, but that I have no Opinion of the Devil's Skill or Knowledge in Futurities on these following Considerations.

18. Foreknowledge which attends Prophecie in true Prophets, is a peculiar Attribute of God in all cases whatever, as well as a more peculiar manner of *such Events as depend upon the Working of some free Agent.* Pag. 16. For if the Devil may be said to *Foreknow things*, because he is a good natural Philosopher, this is no more than any Man in the World can do in many Cases. I know mixing two Liquors of different nature will make a Fermentation, without being reputed a Conjuror I hope. I know a Load-stone will attract the Filings of Steel,

Steel or Iron, as it were in a long string, which to a Country-man would seem little less than Conjuration, if I foretold him that I could make a *String of the Filings of Iron*. So that I excuse the Devil in this Case from having influenc'd ye, as a subtle natural Philosopher. But, says this worthy Author, tho' this his understanding of natural Phylosophy, and the hidden Causes of Things can't be term'd true *Prophe-tic Knowledge*; yet there may be future Contingencies already foretold in some dark Prophecies of the Holy Scriptures, which tho' not understood by Us, may yet be understood by the Devil: Who, if not naturally of greater Wit, must ne by his longer Observati-on, Experience and Study, have attain'd to much greater Skill in such Matters, [Future Contingencies] than any short liv'd Men. Pag. 16. To which I answer,

Answ. That the Devil understands little of the Scriptures, but only a few Texts to misapply 'em, as when he tempted our Saviour, Matth. 3. Perhaps because it seems he has been an *hand Student* for several Thousand Years, and made many *curious Observations* in natural Bodies. He may be a pretty good Philosopher, but in my Opinion this won't help him to the Explanation of one Mystery of Scripture, or the better understanding of any mysterious Prophecy. Besides it is not very Apparent that amongst his *Great Study*, the Bible is one, wherein all our mysterious Prophecies we know, or read of, are contain'd; nay, if he has it, he could not have it before the Flood, yet *Enoch* Prophefied then. So that whence the Devil should get an Interpretation of Divine Mysteries therein contain'd, and from what Commentators I cannot tell. If from Interpreters, or Commentators, they must be *Men*, and consequently know as much as he does. For

He is a wise and cunning Being, an old Serpent, and may by a probable Conjecture only, foretell several Contingencies, and may rarely be out in his Gues. Page 22. 26.

I answer, So by a *Probable Conjecture*, may an *Almanack-maker*, foretell certain *Futurities*, yet this proves him neither *Wise* nor *Cunning*, much less a *Prophet*. And to say *the Devil may be rarely out in his Guess* is a *Grofs Error*; For in the case of *Abab* before mention'd, he *Guessed* false, *I Kings.* and was out, when he said *Ramoth-Gilead* should be taken; so in *Job*, he *Guessed* *Job would Curse God*, but was out of his *Guess*, and knew no more *Job's* mind than I do of the *Great Turks* at this time; And I can't allow it to be true, tho' in the same Page asserted, *That the Devil does truly foretell some things*, more than any mortal *Man* can do, if it be a thing capable to be brought within the *Verge of Human Understanding*. For the Devil may know what's done at the *Bottom of the Sea*, in the *burning Mountain Vesuvius*, or *Things above the Clouds*, where *Man* cannot penetrate; all which discovers his Ability to give an *Account* of things he can see and *Man* cannot come at, but do not inferr that he can *truly foretell* things, I mean, such things as *Inspir'd Prophets* did of old, not such as depend on *Natural Causes*, as above recited. For it is my Opinion that since the Devil and his *Angels* fell from *Heaven*, one part of his *Punishment* was to lose that *Divine faculty of Fore-knowledge*, which probably before the fall his *Angelic Nature* was endow'd with. Hereupon he is styl'd the *Father of Lyes, a Lyer from the beginning*, now *lying* is so inconsistent with a *Prophetic Spirit to tell somethings true sometimes*, that nothing can be so unlikely, that if he knew *truth*, yet he would not foretell it, because such foretelling might produce *Good*, in some perhaps *Repentance*, or else forewarn men to *avoid Mischeif*, neither of which seems to be agreeable to *His Nature and Busines*, *who goes up and down the Earth seeking whom he may Devour*, as the *Scripture* says. As he is a *Prince of the Power of the Air* He may be permitted to raise a violent *Storm* indeed, and may guess, tho' not *certainly foretell as true*, that several *Houses* shall be blown down, several *Ships* sunk, or the like; nay, he may be out in his *guess* too, because that *Foreknowledge of the Consequence of his Power* is a *Prerogative only*

only of the Almighty who bounds his Power, as he doth that of the Sea, saying, *Thus far shalt Thou go and no farther.*

Thus, you have my Reasons to obviate yours, and I hope they will have the desir'd Effect of yours and others speedy Conversion, which is the hearty Prayer of

your Affectionate Friend,

G. Ph.

P. S. Let all be exhorted to examine, whether, if these Inspirations be a Voice from God, the one, Holy and Eternal Spirit; it may not much rather concern them to hearken thereto, than to the Voice of Man. And for a fuller Satisfaction, the Devout Christian is referr'd to the following Treatises, viz. The Cry from the Desart, with Mr. Lacy's Preface; and Mr. Marion's and Mr. Lacy's several Warnings, deliver'd under the Operation of the Holy Spirit, to be had at Benj. Brag's in Paternoster-Row.

London, Decemb. 1707.

F. M.

POST-

POSTSCRIPT.

THIS Paper, call'd, *The Way of Trying Prophets* (to which I have added the Epithite Right to comply with your Opinion, because you take all the World besides to be *in the Wrong*, and Unbelievers) being dispers'd publickly amongst several eminent Citizens in Print, caus'd me to give you an Answer in the like manner, and method, so that if you have had the *unhappy Fortune* to gain Proselytes, I may, as far as in me lies, open their Eyes again, and reduce 'em to common Sense. Had it been a Composition of your own single Pen, and not the result of a Club of your pretended inspir'd Society, as it seems evident enough to me so to be, I should have thought you had wanted more the advice of a Physician to rectifie your Constitution, than such an one as me to confute you by Reason, and Argumentation. I have read of one accus'd that *too much Learning had made him mad*; a Crime which I in no wise object against you, but I should have been heartily glad to have found that you had Discretion enough to keep your self out of enthusiastic Company, You cannot imagin how much I am concern'd to see a Man of your Reputation above the common Herd of Mankind to be so bewilder'd in your Reason, and infatuated in new Methods of an upstart groundless Religion, upon which Head pray give me leave to expostulate a little to set things between me, and you in a fair Light. Who are these Men, and whence came they, of whose pretended Inspirations you are so strenuous a Believer, and into whose tremendous Affairs, as you call 'em, you are become so nice an Enquirer? They seem to me, and I wish they woud so seem to you also, to be like the *Vagabond*

bond Exorcists Jews abovemention'd, without true Title perhaps of Name, or Country, much less of that very Religion they profess. That distinction, or mark of Religion, under which they cover their Designs is couch'd under the Word *Protestant*, though to you it is next to an impossibility to know whether they belong to that very Country, they profess to do, or deserve, or desire to be call'd *Protestants*, except it be that they resolve and *protest* to act under the Cloak of Religion what secret Villanies they can in our Nation. This I have some Reason to believe, because by Permission of the Church of *Rome* in *France*, (as I have credibly been inform'd) a *Church* *notoriously jealous of every new Sect of Religion*. They were not suffer'd to preach up these Doctrines there, but had free Liberty to scatter their Venom in all Protestant Countrys. If this be a false Suggestion, I beg pardon for it, but it is as good Proof, I believe, *though but by report* of their being *False*, as you have of their being *True Inspired Prophets*. In the next Place, can you imagine, (for I don't believe you have abandon'd all Sense, and Reason yet) that if these were *True Prophets*, that Three only should arise before the Day of Judgment to Convert the whole World, and *those out of France* too, and no other Country? Are you a Professsor of the reform'd Religion, as I know you are, and do you conceive that God has selected *Three Prophets* only to convert all Nations immediately before the great and terrible Day of the Lord? Sure you must have a very mean Opinion of your own Judgment, as well as the Protestant Religion, to make choice of *Foreign Apostles*, unknown perhaps even to themselves, to Convert so Learned and Wise a Nation as Ours is; nay, in my Opinion inferior to none in the World for Learning, though for their Politic Wisdom sometimes you must excuse it. Now weigh these Considerations together, and then tell me, whether a wise Man would upon any tolerable Reason approve of the *Original of such a Sect of Men*. In common Affairs of the World, you would hardly employ a Plow-man for a Statesman, or entrust an Highway-man to be your Cash-keeper, especially if you never saw them before, and knew nothing of their Judgment, or Honesty, *but by their own Relation*. Much

Much less, one would think you should rationally then end trust your Conscience; nay, your eternal Salvation, the highest Trust possibly can be, to *unknown Guides, and of unaccountable Original*, of Erroneous, if not Blasphemous Principles. Wherefore I will give you an exhortation Parallel to your own.

*Let all (as you say) be exhorted to examine whether if these Inspirations be a Voice from God, the One Holy and Eternal Spirit, and let this Examination be made not according to the Cunning Devices of Men, whereby they lie in wait to deceive, but according to the Rules of the Holy Scripture, which is Obeying the Voice of God rather than men, especially such men who bring no proof but their own Words for a Divine Commission. And for a fuller satisfaction, the Devout Christian is referr'd to 1st the Holy Scriptures themselves, and the Arguments above-mention'd drawn from their undoubted Authority. 2dly, The Works of the Learned Dr. Jeremiah Taylor, and several other eminent Divines of the Church of England, men of undoubted Characters and Integrity of Lives and Conversations, who have given us exact Rules to know the distinguishing marks of a true, from a false Prophet. Upon the whole therefore let me Conjürē you by all the Tyes and Obligations of a Christian Brother, by those of a good Conscience, and the Holy Vows of your former Religion, by all the sacred Obligations you owe to God, and the Church wherein you were Educated and the hopes of Eternal Salvation, that you seriously weigh, and consider within your self, what a tremendous Thing it is, *Thus to affront God, and bid open Defyance to the Almighty, by boldly assuming to act by such an immediate Power deriv'd from him as it's his sole Prerogative, if he has not conferr'd that gift of Inspiration on your Sect* (as it's plain he has not, or you give the sacred Scriptures the lie) and then tell me for I charge it home to your Conscience) *what a terrible thing it will be to fall into the hands of an affronted Deity, who saith, Vengeance is mine and I will repay, and you may depend upon it, that he is able to execute his Wrath to**

the

the highest degree, and put you on this amazing Question,
Who can dwell with Everlasting Burnings!

From which that infinite mercy may deliver you and all
your Self, is the hearty Prayer of,

Yours,

G. Philadelphia

F I N I S.